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DMVS HELPS CONVICT TRUCK DRIVING SCHOOL AND OWNER

MACON: Maxwell Wood, United States Attorney for the Middle District of Georgia; John W. Long, Special Agent in Charge, U.S. Department of Transportation Office of Inspector General; Thomas E. Marlowe, Georgia Division Director for the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration; and Ronald K. Johnson, Director of Driver's Services for the Georgia Department of Motor Vehicle Safety; announce the conviction today in Federal District Court in Macon of THOMAS R. DUKE, owner of TTT TRUCK DRIVER'S SCHOOL, INC., located at 131 Debbie Court in Macon, Georgia. TTT TRUCK DRIVER'S SCHOOL, INC., the corporation, was also convicted. DUKE and TTT were each convicted of Conspiracy, multiple counts of Making False Statements in a Matter within the jurisdiction of the Department of Transportation and the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration, and multiple counts of Wire Fraud, following a weeklong trial.

Evidence presented at trial showed that DUKE and TTT conspired with Terence E. Haley to falsify the skills tests of 623 TTT students. The fraudulent skills test forms were thereafter submitted by the students to the State of Georgia to obtain commercial drivers licenses to which the students were not entitled. Evidence at trial also showed that DUKE and TTT committed fraud in relation to student loans obtained for TTT students. Terence E. Haley had earlier pled guilty to a charge of Conspiracy, testified at the trial of this matter, and is awaiting sentencing.

Department of Transportation Inspector General Kenneth Mead stated, "We have identified fraud in the commercial driver's license program as one of the nation's most serious safety problems. The conviction of Thomas R. Duke for these criminal violations should send a strong signal that we will not tolerate inadequate training and false testing of commercial truck drivers. We must make every effort to ensure that our nation's truck drivers are properly trained and tested before they are allowed to operate commercial vehicles on our highways. This will help us to protect the traveling public." DUKE faces a maximum sentence of 5 years imprisonment and a \$250,000 fine on each of the forty counts of conviction.

Assistant United States Attorney Paul C. McCommon prosecuted the case for the government. For additional information, contact U.S. Attorney Maxwell Wood or Assistant U.S. Attorney Paul McCommon through Pamela Lightsey at 478-621-2603 or visit our web site at www.usdoj.gov/usao/gam.